ROAD
to automata

Road to Automata
contributors

Michael
Caleb
Joe
Leo
Jesse
Craig

Jordan
Connor
Cullen
Jasper
Thomas
Joel

Harrison
Toby
Archie
Kieran
Ted
Daniel
Josh

Louie
Kian
Lennon
Owen
Jacob
Flinn

introduction

Road to Automata is the end product of an innovative collaboration between Falmouth Art Gallery, Year 9 students from Penryn College, their teachers Beth Sullivan and Linda Herring and writer Mac Dunlop. For our part we were delighted to welcome the students to the Art Gallery where they were inspired by our unique collection of automata to make their own creative responses in 3D, 2D and writing. The students were fully engaged with this project and I think this shines out of their writing. Well done to all concerned! We are very grateful to the Max Reinhardt Charitable Trust, 'engage' and the National Association of Writers in Education (NAWE) for selecting this project as one of only three pilots in the country to get an inaugural Max Reinhardt Literacy Award.

Henrietta Boex, Director
Falmouth Art Gallery

This book has been produced as part of the Max Reinhardt Literacy Awards (MRLA) in 2014. MRLA is a pilot programme developed by engage, the National Association for Gallery Education, and the National Association of Writers in Education (NAWE) to enable galleries, art museums and visual arts venues to support a dedicated programme of creative writing and literacy work with schools. The Awards are funded by the Max Reinhardt Charitable Trust.

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automaton *lôˈtämətən; -ˌtänl*
noun (pl. -ta l-təl or -tons)
a moving mechanical device made in imitation of a human being.

Our *Road to Automata* project was inspired by Falmouth Art Gallery's unique collection of Automata sculpture, and the theme of dystopian future in literature. This theme - along with character development - was also part of the students coursework at the time. Charlotte Davis and I worked with Beth Sullivan and Linda Herring by first meeting with the students and introducing them to this MRLA commission to develop writing inspired by art in gallery and museum collections. We presented the class with a brief history of automata in art and in literature, and the significance of the Falmouth Gallery's Collection.

Our discussion progressed into the world of modern automata, what we today commonly refer to as 'robots'. Alongside this Charlotte was cheered for being an active player of computer games, and our conversation with the students about what we might do together started to gel. We began imagining dystopian worlds and computer games where futurist automata and humans would somehow coexist.

The artist Tony Johns and I then met to develop the automata making and writing workshops, where the students came to the gallery, not just to look at automata, but to have a go at making some themselves. The resulting sculptures recycled from old materials quickly took on imagined characteristics and functions as the students worked in groups, making and discussing their ideas as the shapes began to form.

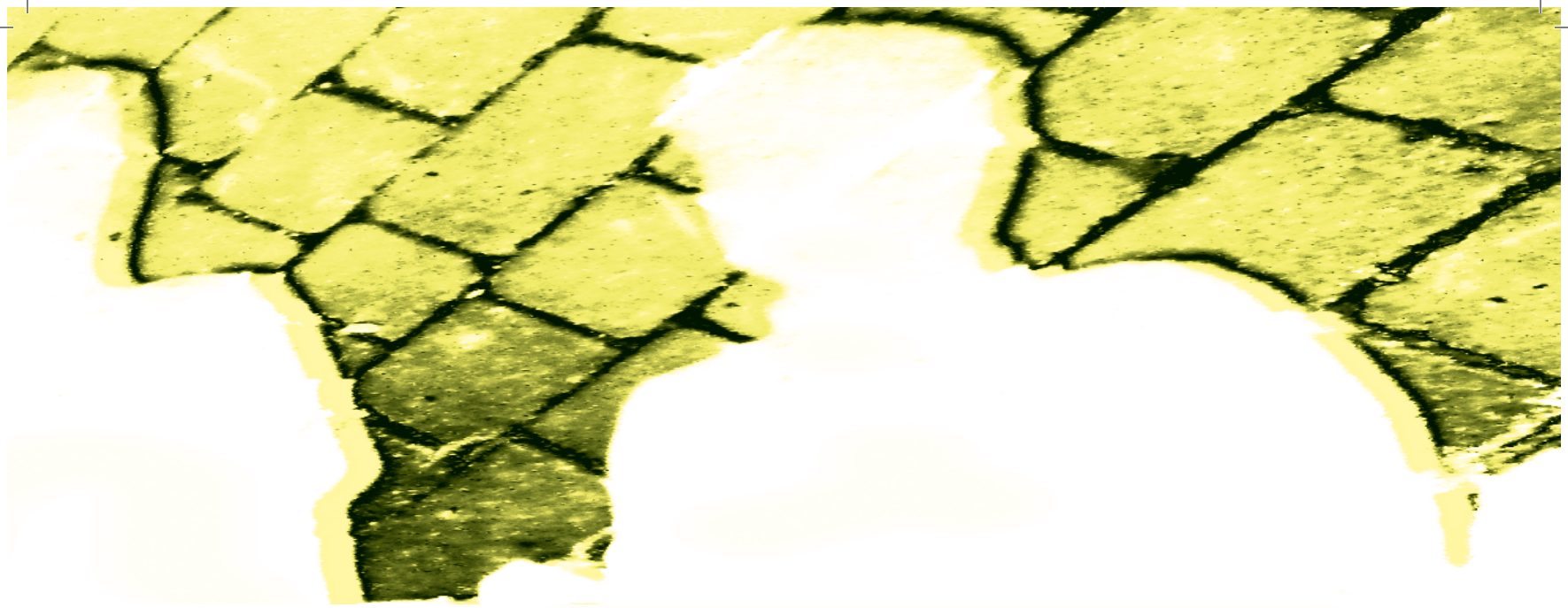
Our next sessions then took place back at Penryn College. The students and I debated ethical questions, laws for robots, bio-robots and so on before going outside, where we re-imagined the landscape around the school as the dystopian world where our fictional human and modern automata characters lived.

Lastly we took the opportunity offered by this project and Henrietta's infectious enthusiasm to edit and re-work their writing in a final design and layout session - the results of which you are looking at. Unfortunately, not every font and image selected by the students could be used, and the colours are at best approximations, nevertheless I hope this book illustrates the great potential in their creative writing and in their unique visual concepts. I'm very proud to have had the chance to work with these students, and I've learnt a great deal from the exchange.

Mac Dunlop
Writer and Design Facilitator
Road to Automata, 2015

I suppose you want to know what happened.

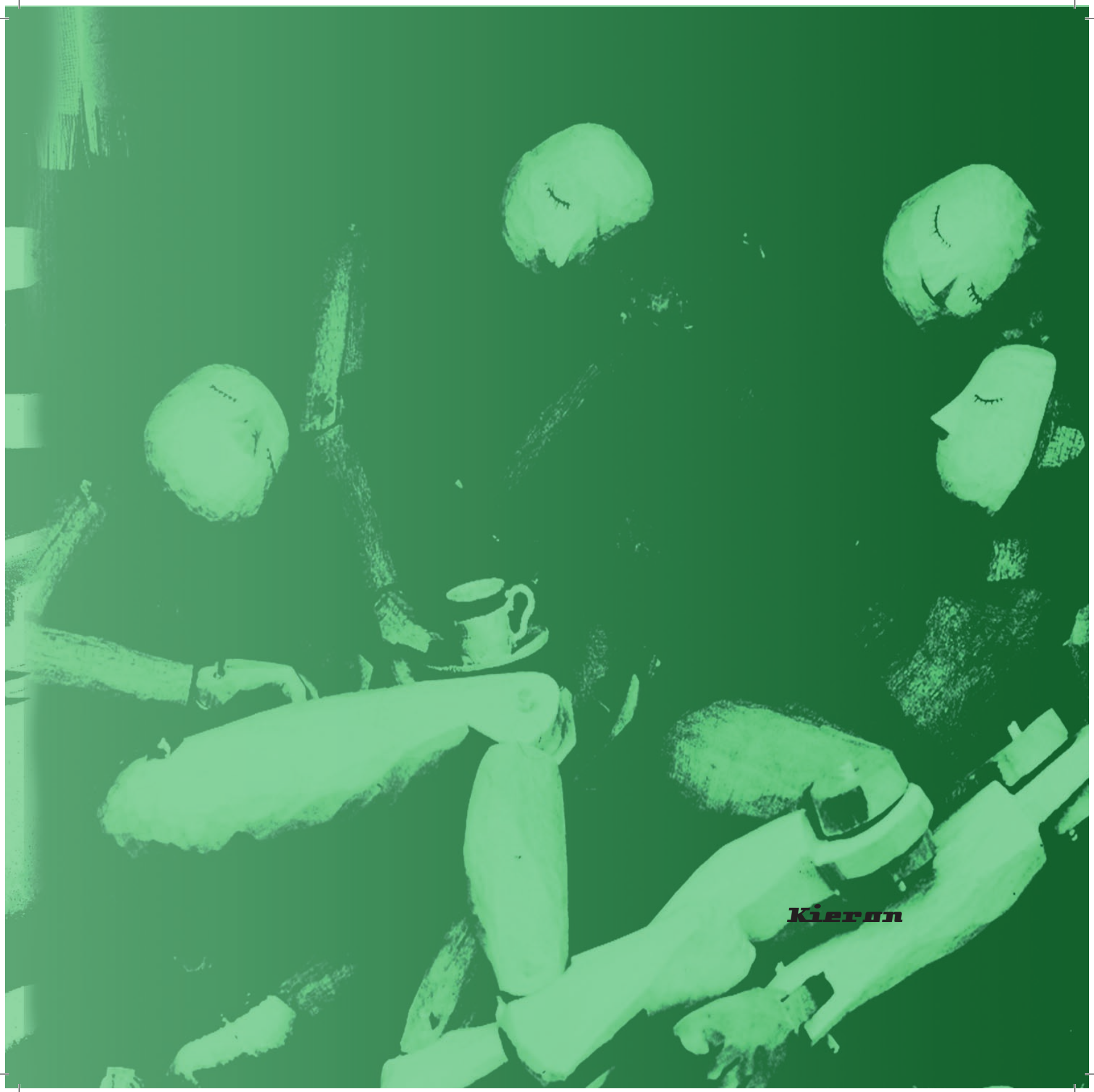
Well then, here goes.

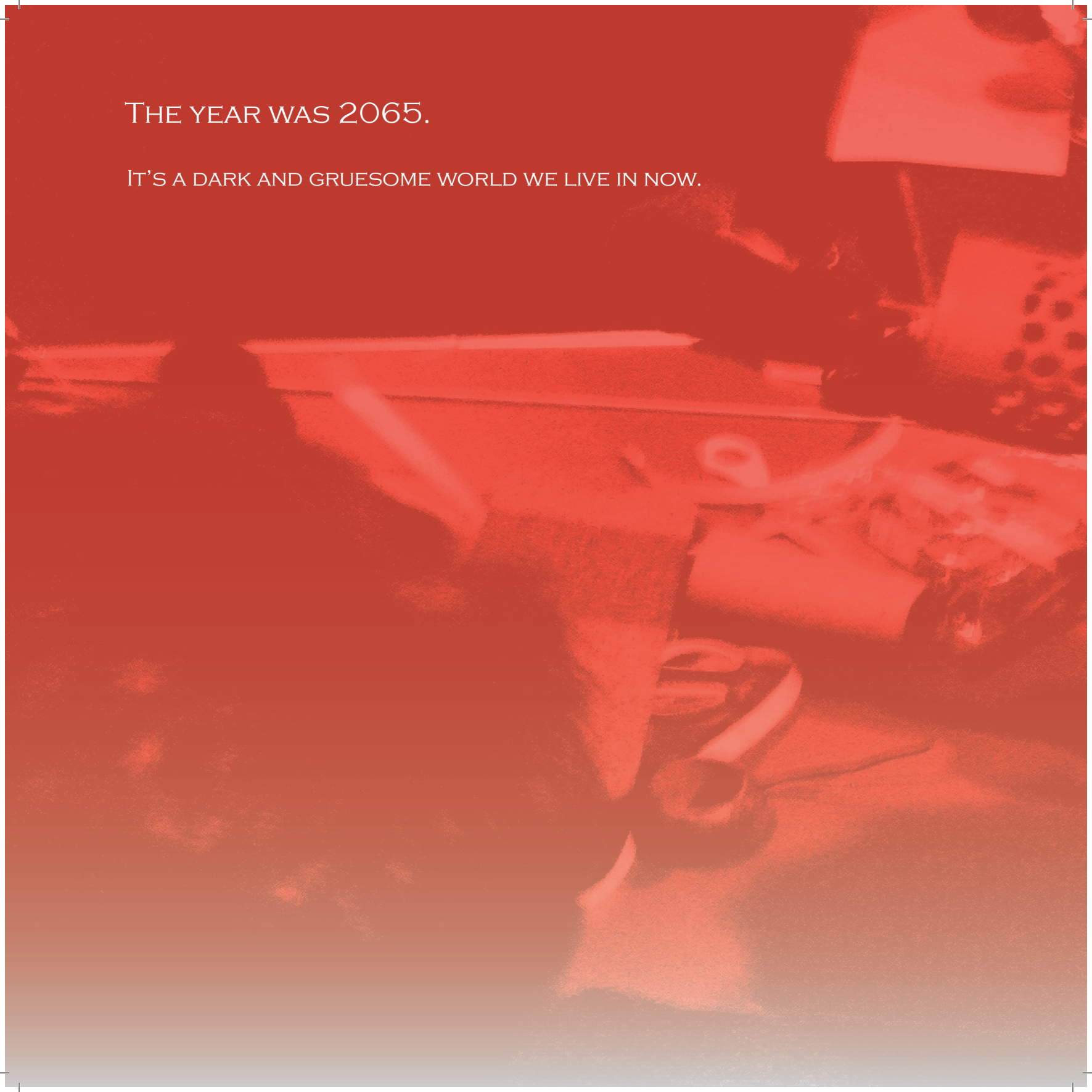


There was a technical hitch with one of the robots.

It turned bad...

Flying Drones
Blown up ground
Missiles laying all around
People dead
but I'm alive
All I want to do is survive

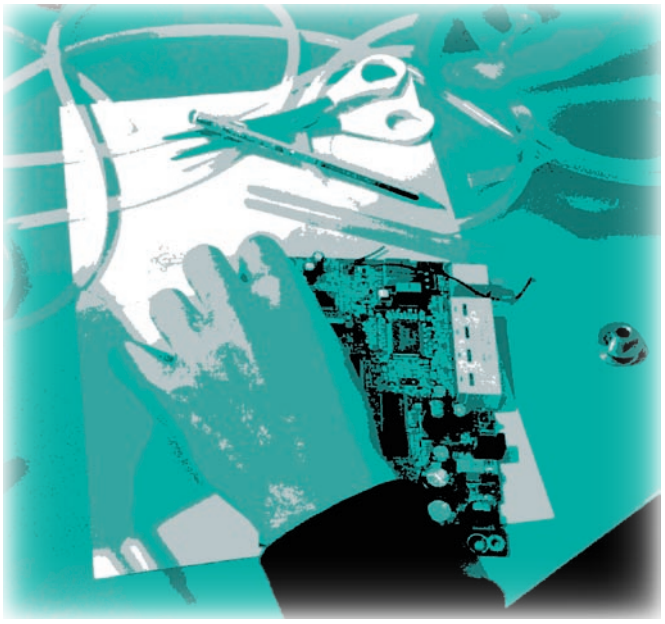

Kieran


The year was 2065.
It's a dark and gruesome world we live in now.

It's been 10 years since the apocalypse of the world most advanced and destructive creation, the programme that obliterated half the world's human population. Armageddon, the only robot that could destroy and create anything within its power. The people that created this monster were instantly killed. However they had thought that what they created was indestructible, so they created a weakness.

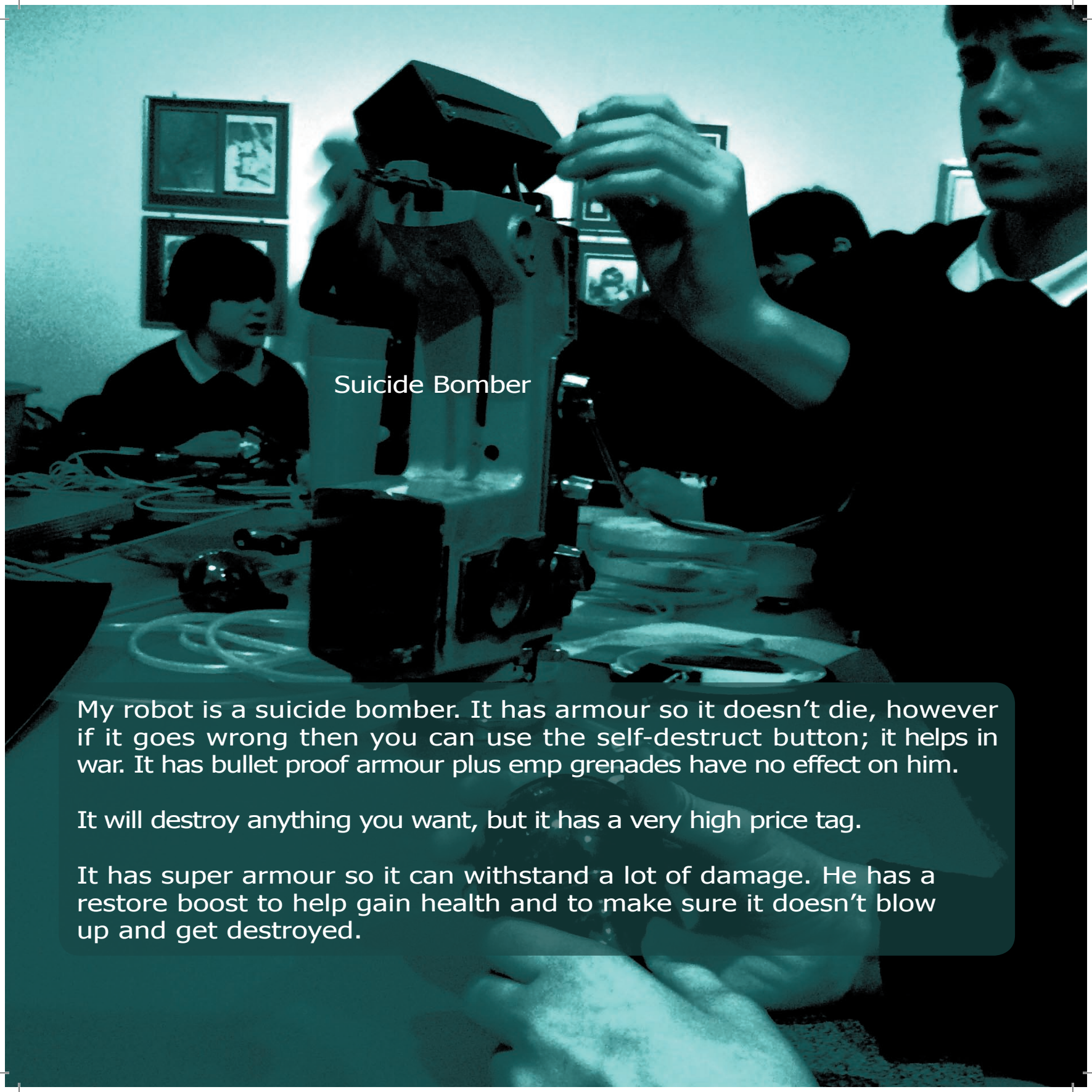
They used whatever they had left and created a programme that would destroy it if it went AWOL and injected it into the child of the head scientist. The scientist then sent the child home. A few hours after the child had left. All the systems shut down and Armageddon had awoken because the programme hadn't finished. It did not get the data that would give it common sense. It went on a rampage.

Jordan



We have been working on as destruction robot called Tyrone. Tyrone is friendly but will attack any threats towards it. He has a rare gun called S.I.R.I.E. a surveillance camera, a fan to keep himself cool, he also has an EMP system. No one wants to face him and if someone does, by golly they will be destroyed.

Jacob



Suicide Bomber

My robot is a suicide bomber. It has armour so it doesn't die, however if it goes wrong then you can use the self-destruct button; it helps in war. It has bullet proof armour plus emp grenades have no effect on him.

It will destroy anything you want, but it has a very high price tag.

It has super armour so it can withstand a lot of damage. He has a restore boost to help gain health and to make sure it doesn't blow up and get destroyed.

Josh

IT WAS FRIDAY AFTERNOON. THE MIST WAS AS BLACK AS A BLANKET. ALL I COULD SEE WAS THE BIG BLACK DARK SMOKE COMING OUT OF THE TESTING CENTRE WHERE THEY WERE MAKING ROBOTS ACT LIKE HUMANS. THE LIGHTS SHONE OUT, ALLOWING THEIR EVIL MAKERS TO CONTINUE THEIR DEADLY TRADE. I WAS SCARED, MORE SCARED THAN I'VE EVER BEEN IN MY LIFE; MY SURVIVAL DEPENDED ON ME STAYING HIDDEN...

THE LIGHTS SHONE OUT, ALLOWING THEIR EVIL MAKERS TO CONTINUE THEIR DEADLY TRADE.

I WAS SCARED, MORE SCARED THAN I'VE EVER BEEN IN MY LIFE; MY SURVIVAL DEPENDED ON ME STAYING HIDDEN...

MICHAEL

Flinn's Story

In what used to be a football pitch there is now a test ground for robots. What used to be goals are now waste dumpers for the old broken robots. In the distance you can see old windmills which generate electricity for the robots. In the sky you can see dark cloudy mist.

You don't see many kids around here. It is a school, most of them stay inside. There's nothing out here for them. My name is Dorothy. I live in the secret bunker underneath the school. It keeps me safe from them, I mean the robots. A lot has changed since they were made. They used the school as a test sight.

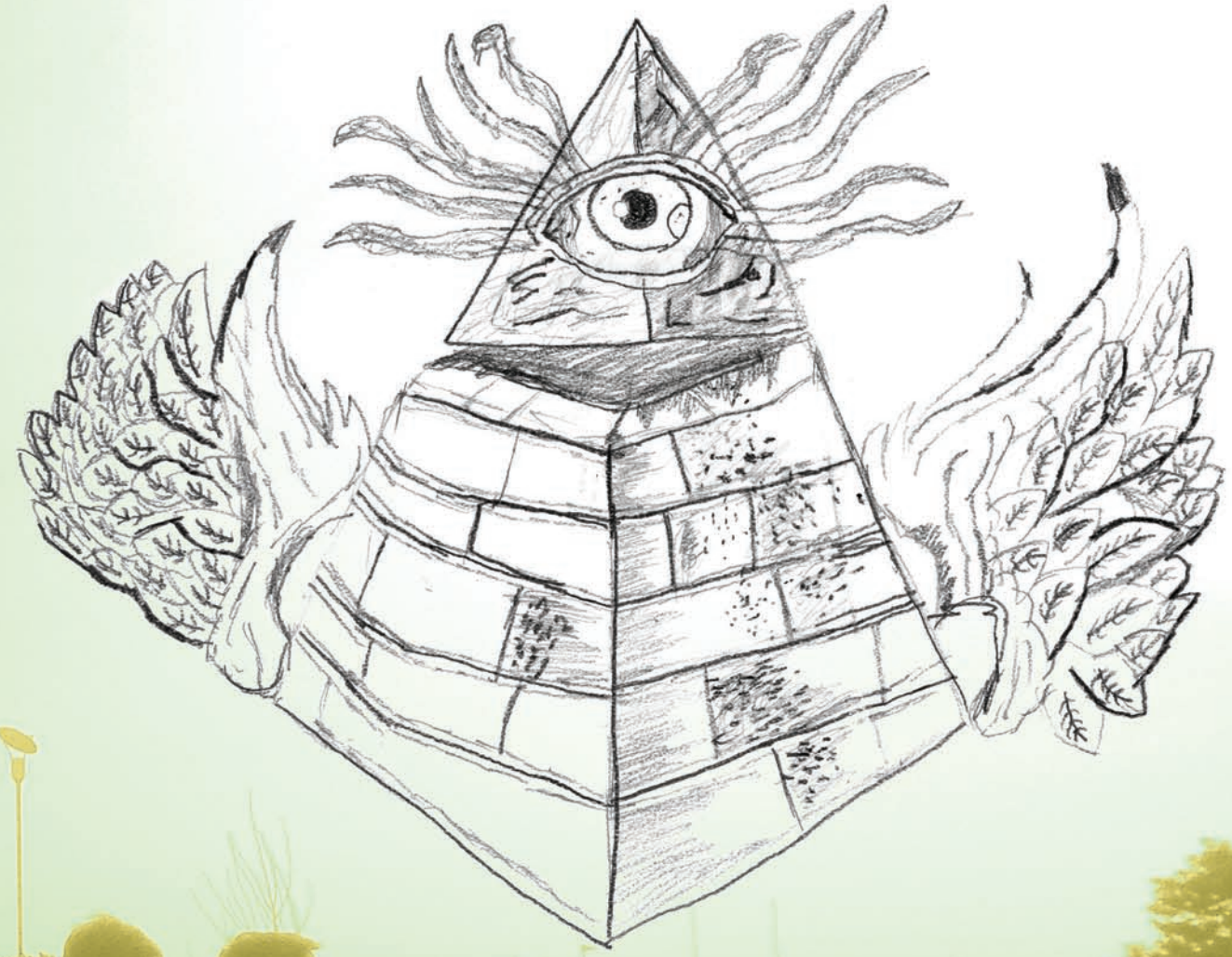
Flinn

The grass shines a dark shade of green. But it's not real grass.
It's fake like the image bestowed upon me.
The truth is a motionless wasteland filled with robot corpses.

The rust from the robot glows yellow in the colourless wasteland.
You may ask why there are robot corpses. But this place isn't what they say it is.

This is a testing facility where if they don't pass they die and the only way they have to find out if they passed is the hard way!

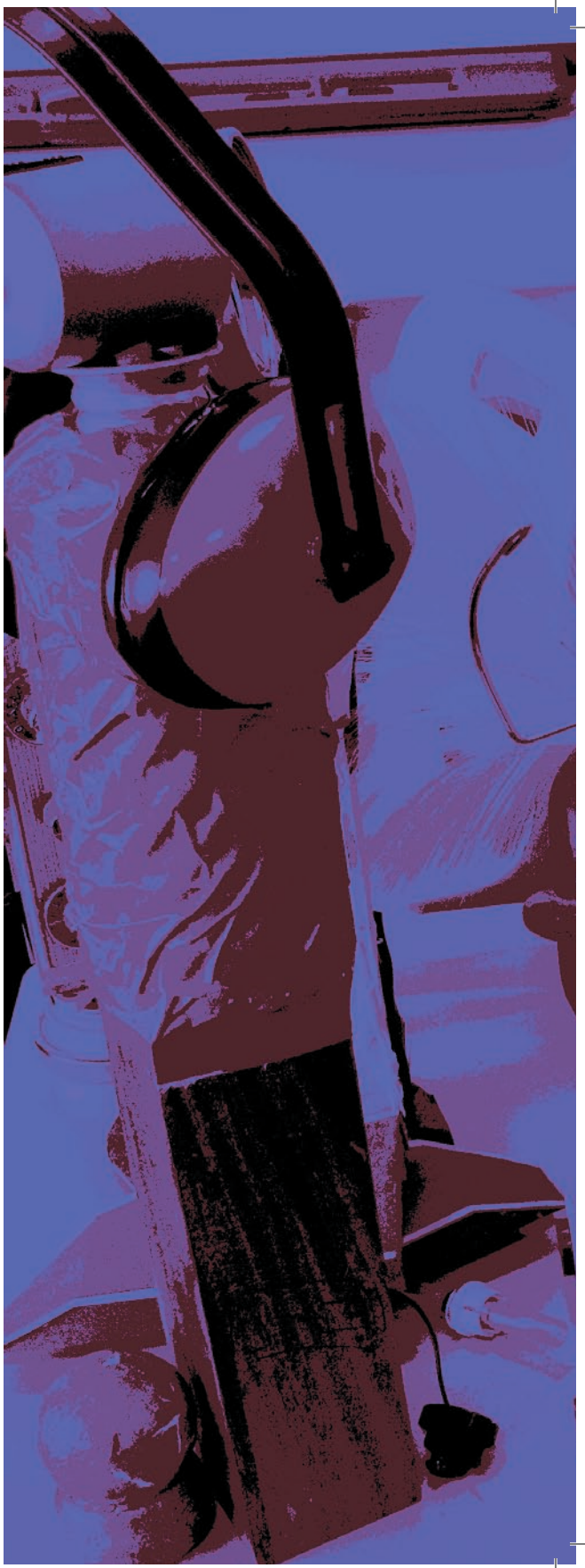
Normal healthy robots being thrown away like rubbish down a bin.
They are just prisoners waiting to be killed.

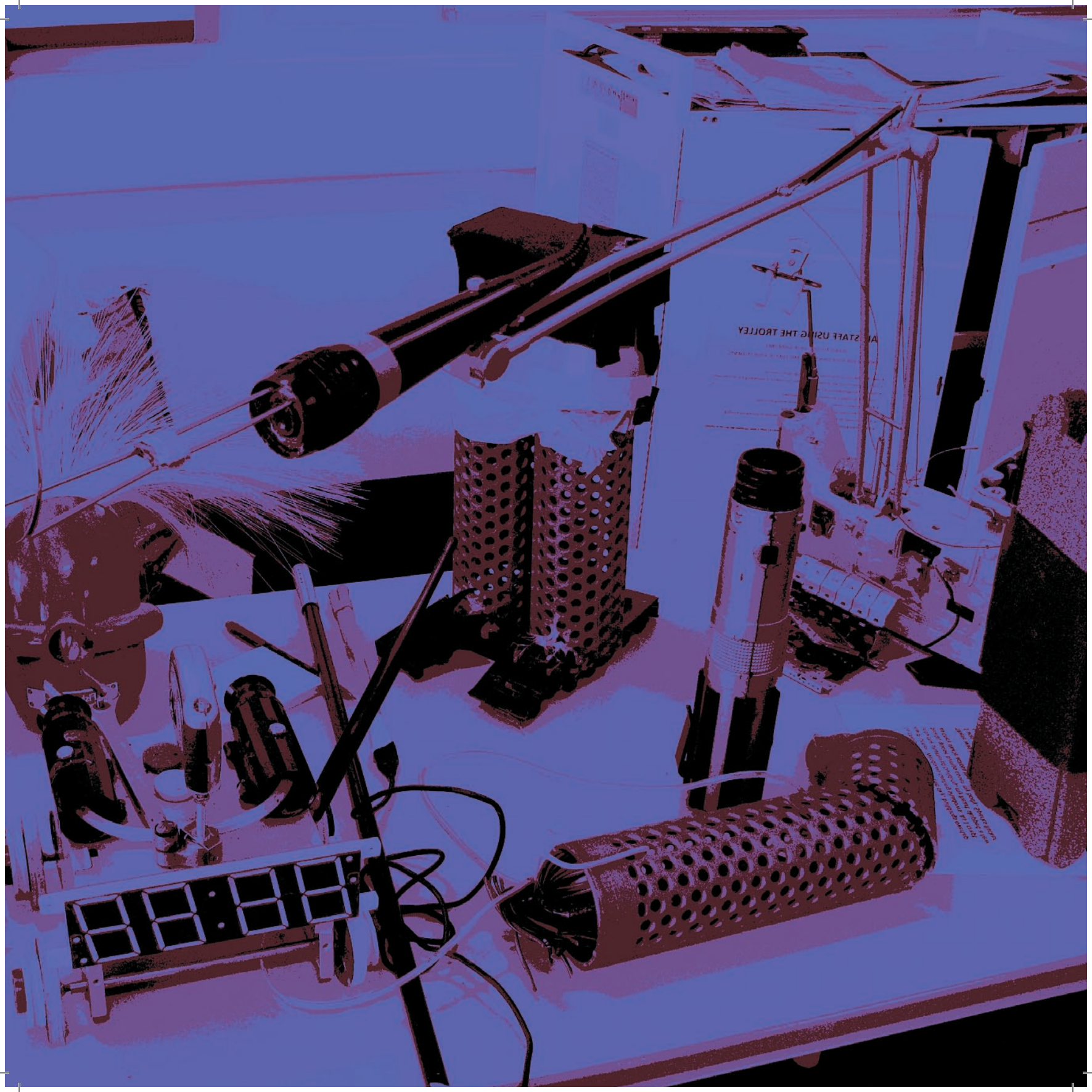


Owen

Archie's Story

The brittle wind whisked past my ears, my body was weighted into the squelching mud. The retched water spilled over my boots like wine over a glass. the trees now towering over the landscape and a dark grey sky looms over the land as black as coal from a mine choking all living things but so life changed to keep from dying. Just like us we have all changed to stay alive. At the start everything died along with our hope for the old times but we all had to evolve and so did the life on Earth. The grass died when the nukes hit, so did many of us, then it changed to live, then the...

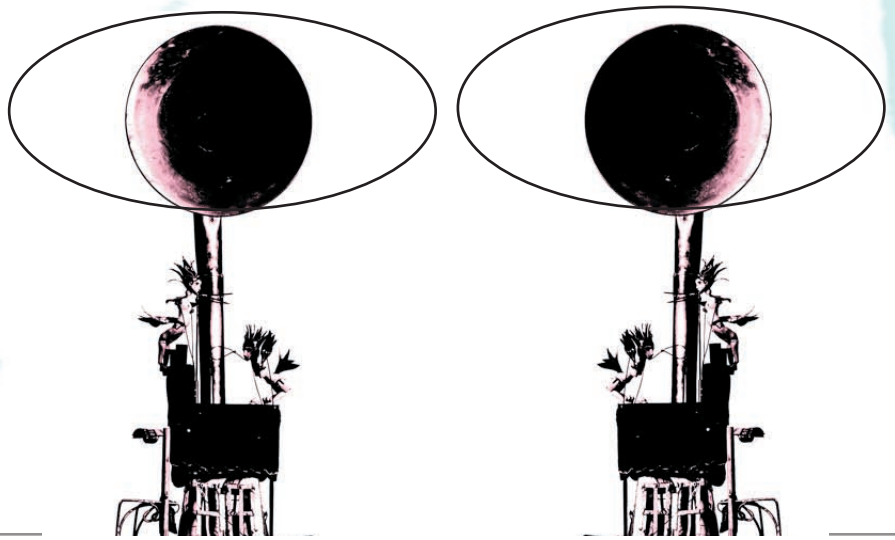


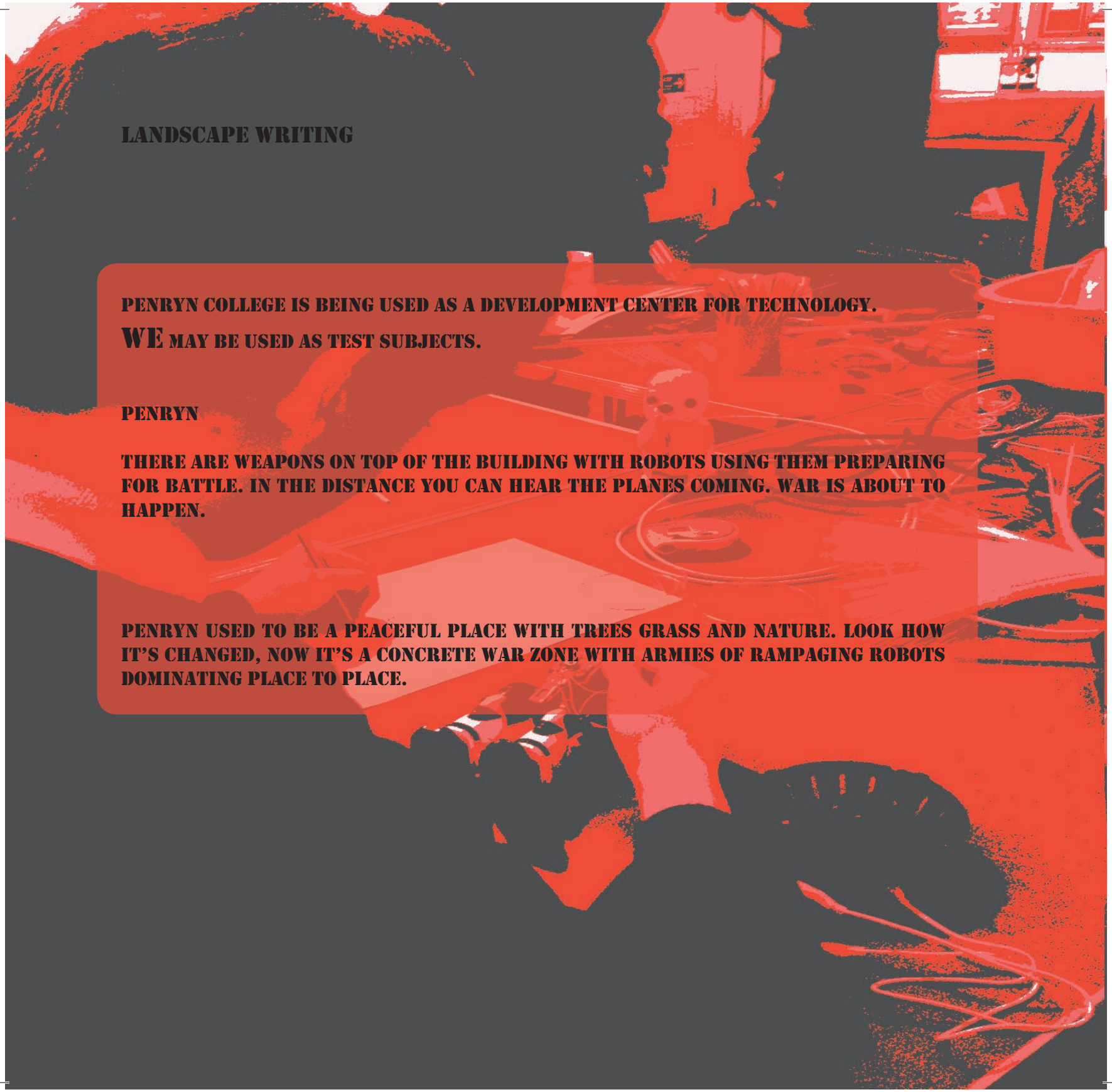


The year is 2015 and the school once known as Penryn College is now a desolate place. Always being watched by the scientists.

The eyes of the teachers forever watching you, me and everything. The teachers only come out at night and stare with their eyes as red as blood and skin as silver as iron.

Craig





LANDSCAPE WRITING

PENRYN COLLEGE IS BEING USED AS A DEVELOPMENT CENTER FOR TECHNOLOGY.

WE MAY BE USED AS TEST SUBJECTS.

PENRYN

THERE ARE WEAPONS ON TOP OF THE BUILDING WITH ROBOTS USING THEM PREPARING FOR BATTLE. IN THE DISTANCE YOU CAN HEAR THE PLANES COMING. WAR IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN.

PENRYN USED TO BE A PEACEFUL PLACE WITH TREES GRASS AND NATURE. LOOK HOW IT'S CHANGED, NOW IT'S A CONCRETE WAR ZONE WITH ARMIES OF RAMPAGING ROBOTS DOMINATING PLACE TO PLACE.

LET'S TALK ABOUT THE ROBOTS. THE POWERFUL CONTROLLING ROBOTS. WITH THOSE STRONG METAL PARTS AND THEIR AMAZING CAMERA SIGHT. THEY COULD SEE A NEEDLE IN A HAYSTACK EVEN IF THE HAYSTACK WAS MILES LONG. I MEAN, WHAT CHANCE DO WE REALLY HAVE IN BEATING THEM? NONE! BUT WE CAN HAVE A GOOD GO.

BOOK TITLES:
DYSTOPIAN MAYHEM
ATOMIC MAYHEM

CHAPTER TITLES:
KENTUCKY FRIED ROBOT

NAME: D319
WORLD: UNKNOWN
SPECIAL POWER: FLYING ABILITY
INTELLIGENCE: HE GOES INTO A NUCLEAR/ DYSTOPIA WAR ZONE TO SEARCH FOR THINGS OR GO SOMEWHERE NO HUMAN CAN.

TED

Connor's Story

In this desolate landscape the deadly chemicals fill the air, smoke more black than the rim of a tyre. This world that we live in now should not be classed a world but as hell. The leader of this prison, they call school, is Miss Hunter and she lives up to her reputation. The gas chambers that used to be the football pitch are being used daily, anyone that is caught smoking will get smoked literally.

Miss Hunter employs school bullies to run around stealing the Year 7s lunch money.

ROBOTS

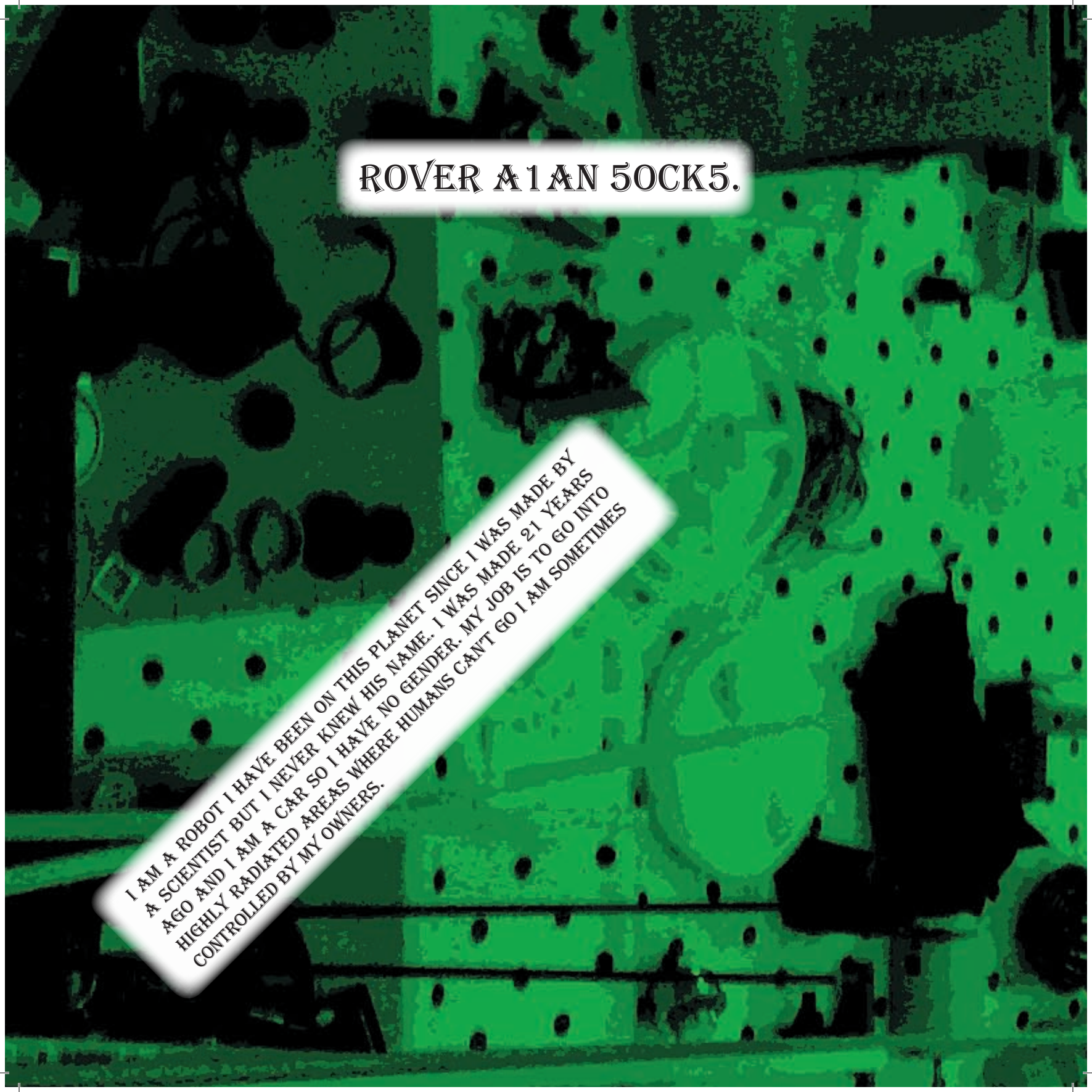
In the dark suspense of the sky, buildings overlap each other. Windows casting shadows. As I crept into the shattered building, my heart skipped a few beats; goose bumps cover my body. Sparks flicker as they skate across the wall.

There was indistinctive figures in the dark corridor. I was shaking in fear; dead bodies litter the floor. In the distance I could hear the metallic feet on tiled floor.
It was a robot. His red eyes menacing me,
a bright green light shone from its head blinding me.
Leaving a patch of green and purple images burnt onto my retina.

Sparks flicker
as they skate across the wall.

Leaving a patch of green
and purple images
burnt onto my retina.

Caleb


ROVER A1AN 5OCK5.
I AM A ROBOT I HAVE BEEN ON THIS PLANET SINCE I WAS MADE BY A SCIENTIST BUT I NEVER KNEW HIS NAME. I WAS MADE 21 YEARS AGO AND I AM A CAR SO I HAVE NO GENDER. MY JOB IS TO GO INTO HIGHLY RADIATED AREAS WHERE HUMANS CAN'T GO I AM SOMETIMES CONTROLLED BY MY OWNERS.

ON MY ROBOT THERE IS A CAMERA FOR A SENSOR, BINOCULARS FOR EYES SO WE CAN SEE WHEN WE TAKE CONTROL OF IT AND ON THE BINOCULARS THERE IS INFRARED AS WELL. WE HAVE ATTACHED AN ANTENNA TO THE SIDE OF THE ROBOT FOR TRACKING, A PANEL AT THE BACK OF IT TO CHARGE IT UP BY SOLAR AND FOR IDENTIFICATION. THERE ARE ALSO TWO BUTTONS THAT LIGHT UP AND HAVE THINGS INSIDE OF IT; A LASER SHOOTER AND A TASER.
LOUIE

In the dead landscape robot's bodies scatter the
once lovely place but not anymore.

Half alive robots crawl around for someone to kill them or to find a magnet to put on their head so they won't know what's wrong.

Joel

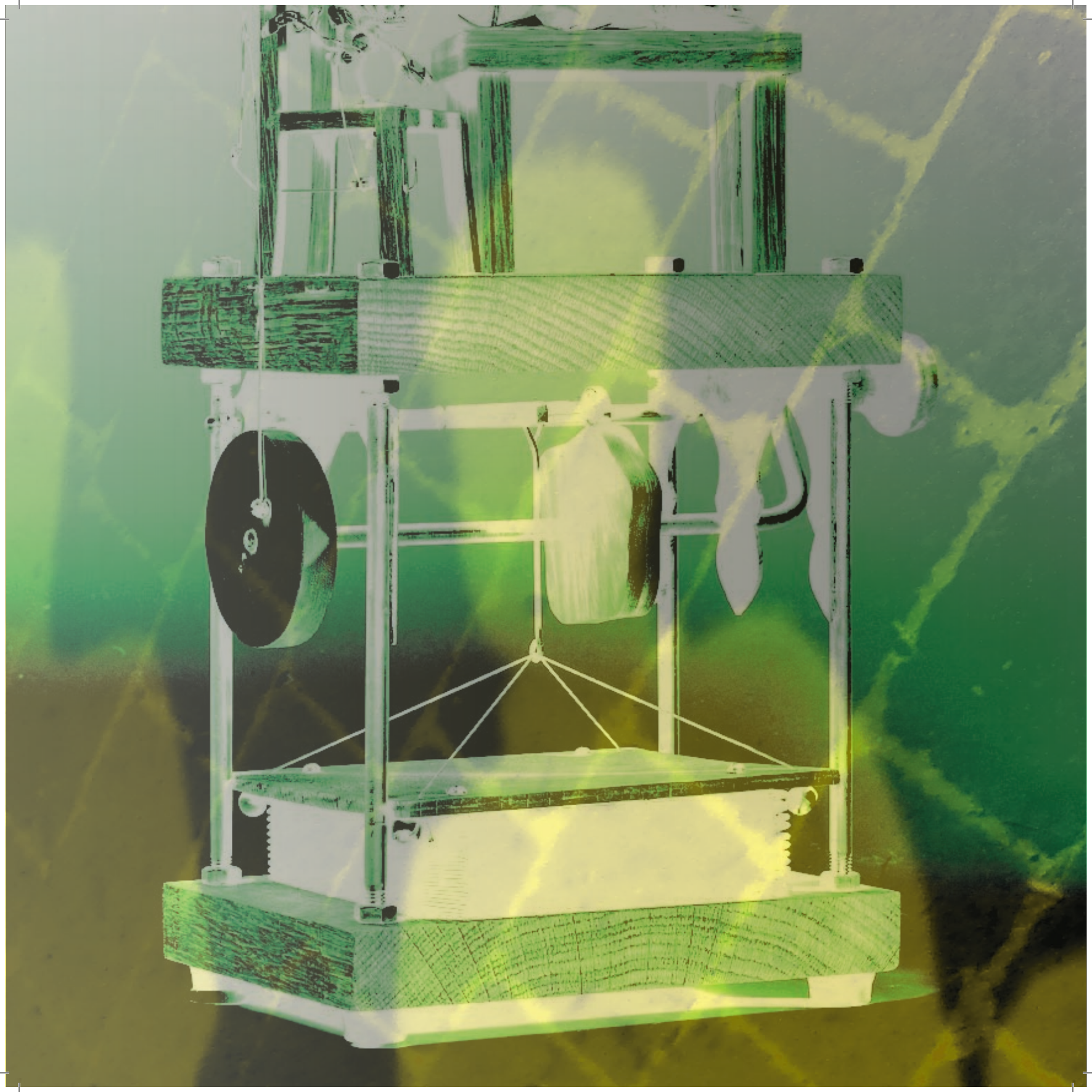
Blades sheathed, a fried imprint of a smile hanging on its face, its bare steel body has been corroded away by rust like parasites. A cold stare analysing the area around it. Its mission protocol has been engaged...

Joe

In the haze of the morning, the nukes prepare to launch as Kim Jon Un watches in pride as North Korea are about to dominate the world.

As the skybot 5250 crosses the border of North Korea, it can notice the change.The fake shops, animals getting abused and soldiers saluting and the final one, pictures of their 'Lord Kim Jon Un'.

The controller of the spybot 5250 is shocked to see how much of a dictatorship this country is. It's the most horrendous sight in the world anyone could think of.

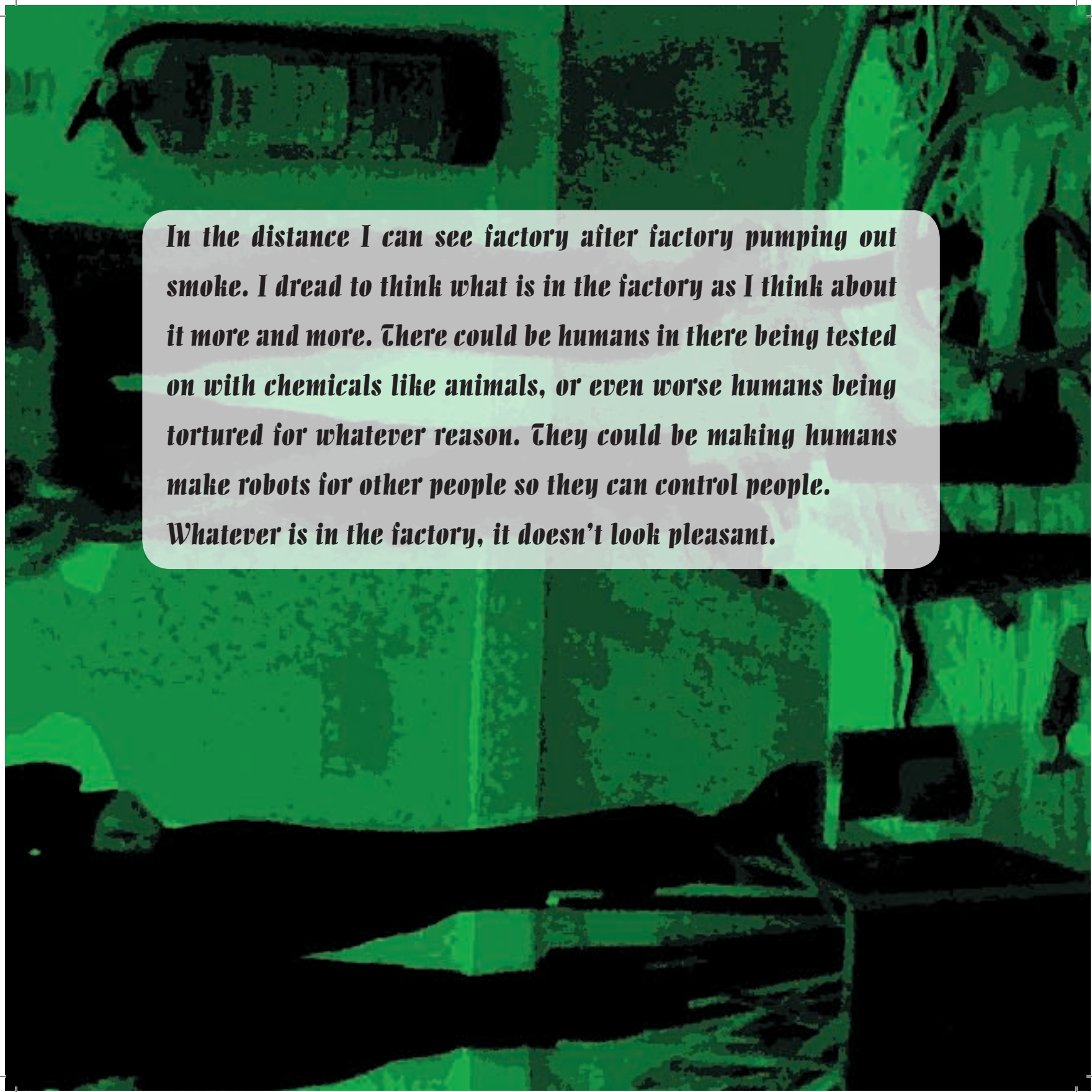


Harrison's Story

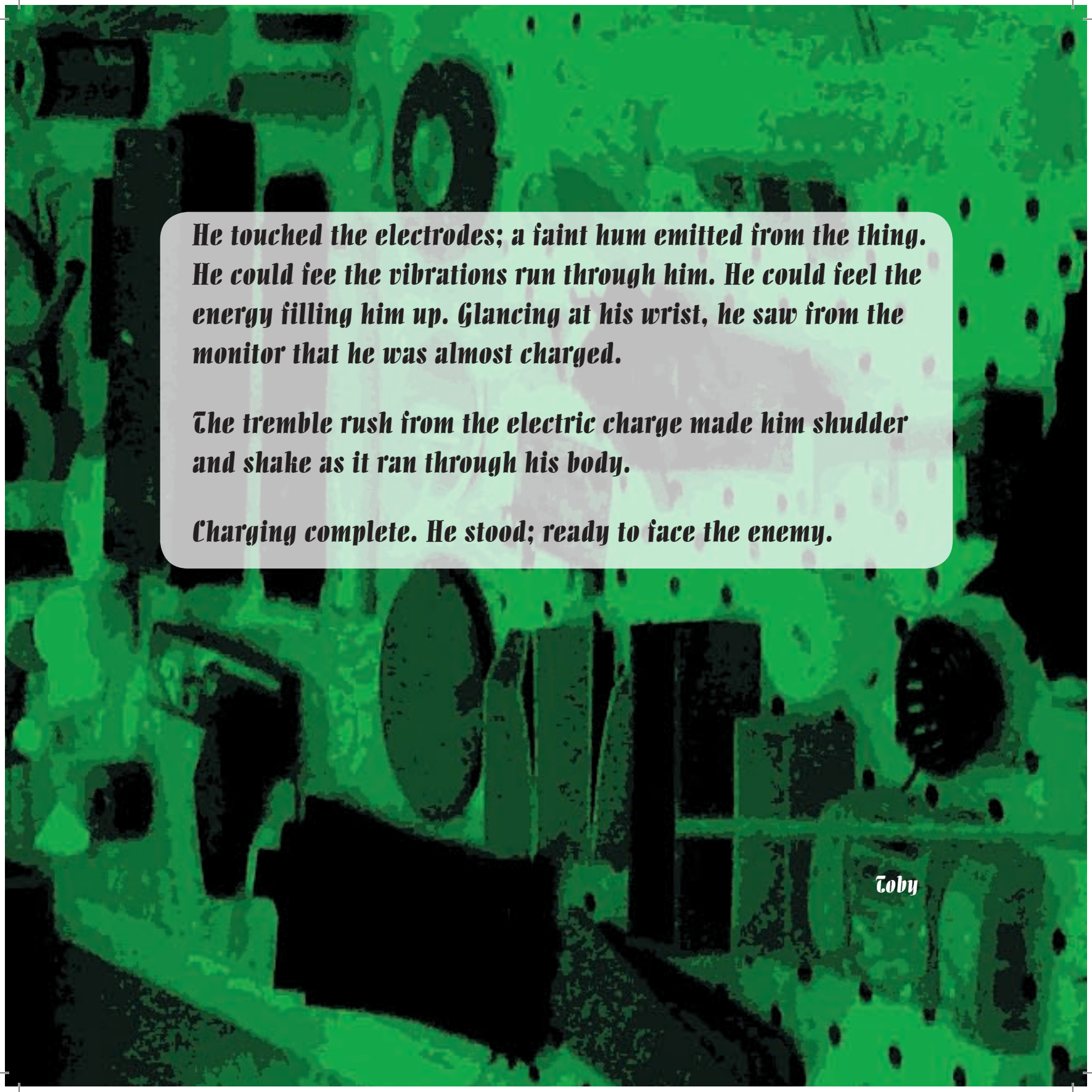
The wind was harsh; the grinding of the metal could be heard in the distance. They were coming.

We could feel the ground shake as the army came towards us they were charging forward; we were all in danger.

Why did we let the machines take over?



In the distance I can see factory after factory pumping out smoke. I dread to think what is in the factory as I think about it more and more. There could be humans in there being tested on with chemicals like animals, or even worse humans being tortured for whatever reason. They could be making humans make robots for other people so they can control people. Whatever is in the factory, it doesn't look pleasant.



He touched the electrodes; a faint hum emitted from the thing. He could fee the vibrations run through him. He could feel the energy filling him up. Glancing at his wrist, he saw from the monitor that he was almost charged.

The tremble rush from the electric charge made him shudder and shake as it ran through his body.

Charging complete. He stood; ready to face the enemy.

Toby

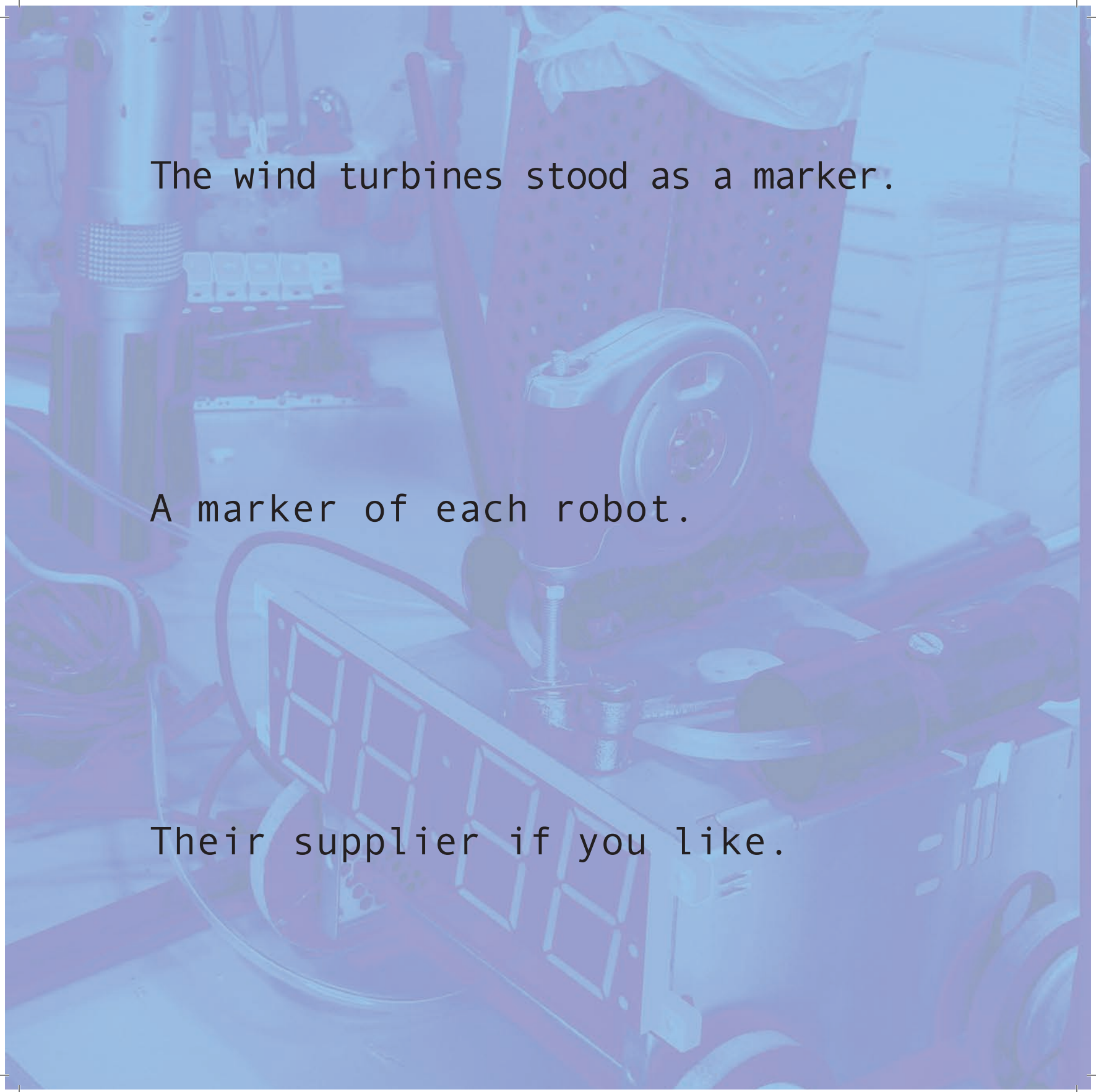
Prisoners for life

It's a very dark place fields of broken concrete for miles and miles. There's the factory that blows out loads of poisonous smoke that kills all the animals, I'm sure they're fine with it; there's no grass for them to eat, just crumbly stone. The snapped trees like match sticks falling down and killing anything in its way. In the factory was a desolate sweat shop and the people that worked there had nothing to live for.

The way they treat people makes me sick.

Water dripping from the roof; kids and adults gasp for air as they are just strong enough to sew. They get paid a pound if that. Spider webs in the corner of the building as no one cares to clean them; barbed wire outside the window so no one would dare to jump out.

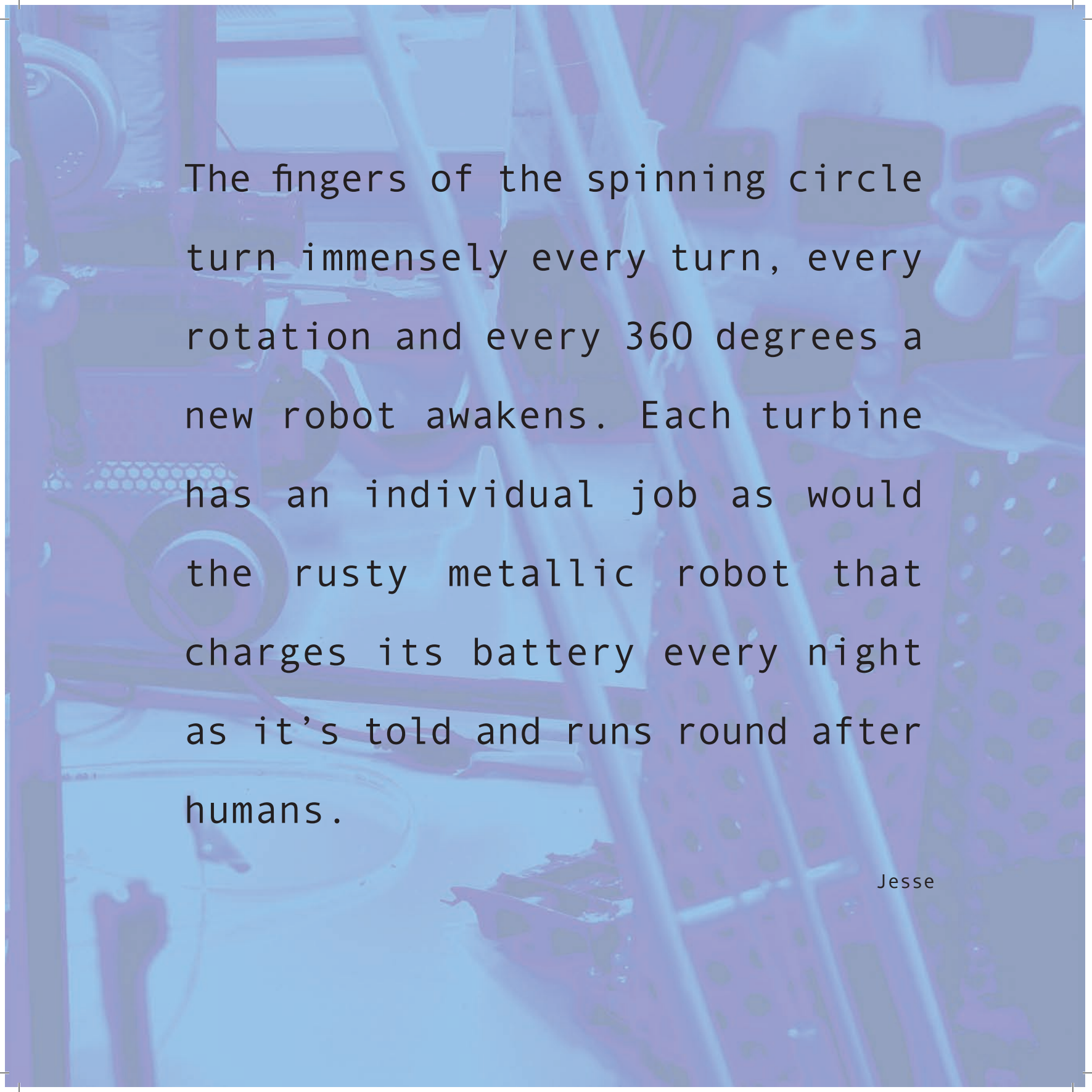
Cullen



The wind turbines stood as a marker.

A marker of each robot.

Their supplier if you like.



The fingers of the spinning circle turn immensely every turn, every rotation and every 360 degrees a new robot awakens. Each turbine has an individual job as would the rusty metallic robot that charges its battery every night as it’s told and runs round after humans.

Jesse

The World Destroyed

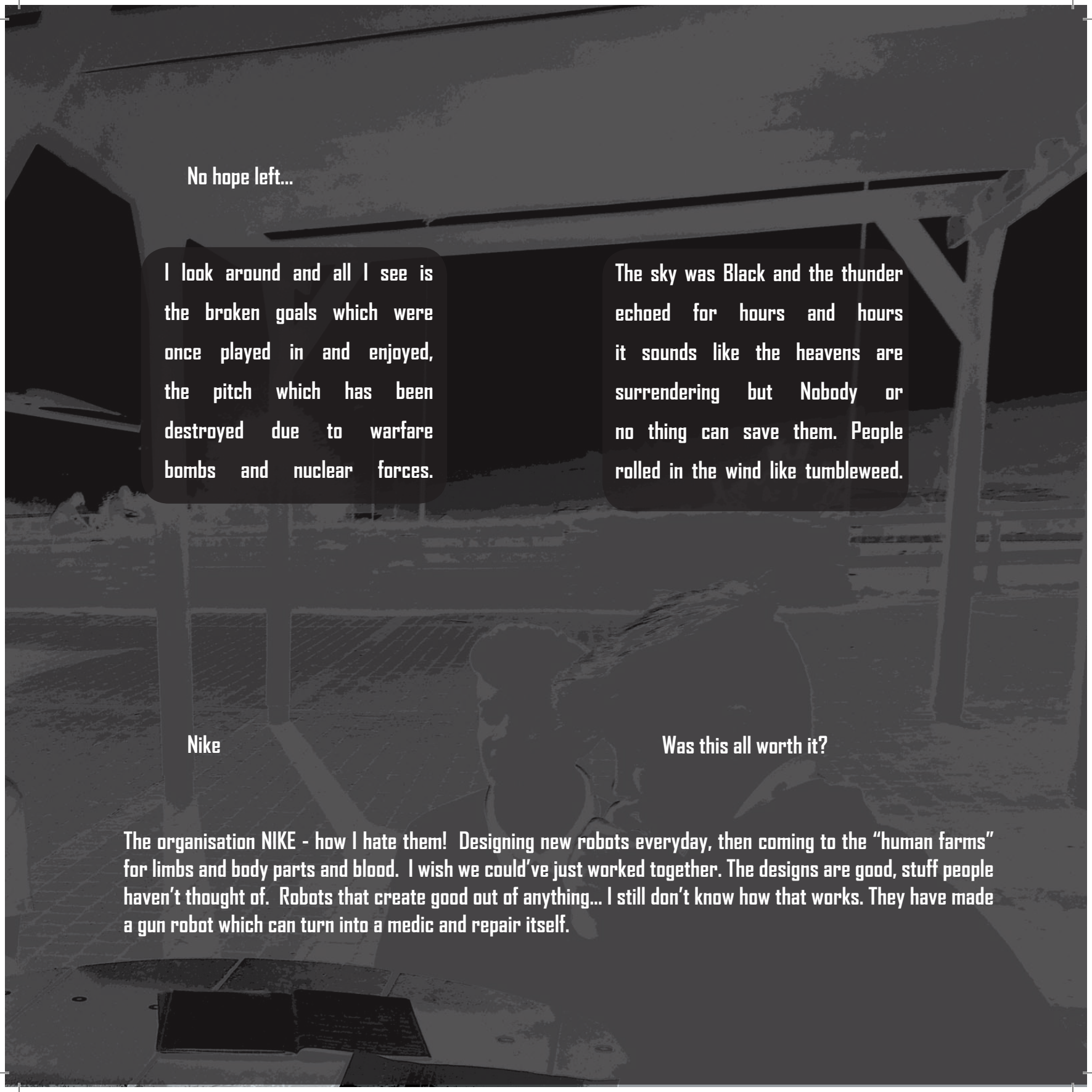
The world's turned to rubble. Robots came and took over everything! Slaughtered billions of people. Few have survived. As far as we know we are the last humans on this earth. I have seen my family , friends, innocent people killed. I and a few other people are going to avenge them.

2 months later...

Robots have taken over. They have already set up take-aways, night clubs and schools. I don't understand how they can live with everything they have done. WE are going to launch our first attack on the new night club where the new evil DJ robot is.
We are doing this to send a message! No more new robots! Old robots will stay... for now.

A few days later...

Those robots have no souls! How can they keep humans in Slaughter Factories! Taking pieces and limbs from humans to make new robots! Even worse, they do it when we are still alive and use blunt knives because they can't be bothered to get sharp ones.



No hope left...

I look around and all I see is the broken goals which were once played in and enjoyed, the pitch which has been destroyed due to warfare bombs and nuclear forces.

The sky was Black and the thunder echoed for hours and hours it sounds like the heavens are surrendering but Nobody or no thing can save them. People rolled in the wind like tumbleweed.

Nike

Was this all worth it?

The organisation NIKE - how I hate them! Designing new robots everyday, then coming to the "human farms" for limbs and body parts and blood. I wish we could've just worked together. The designs are good, stuff people haven't thought of. Robots that create good out of anything... I still don't know how that works. They have made a gun robot which can turn into a medic and repair itself.

Thomas

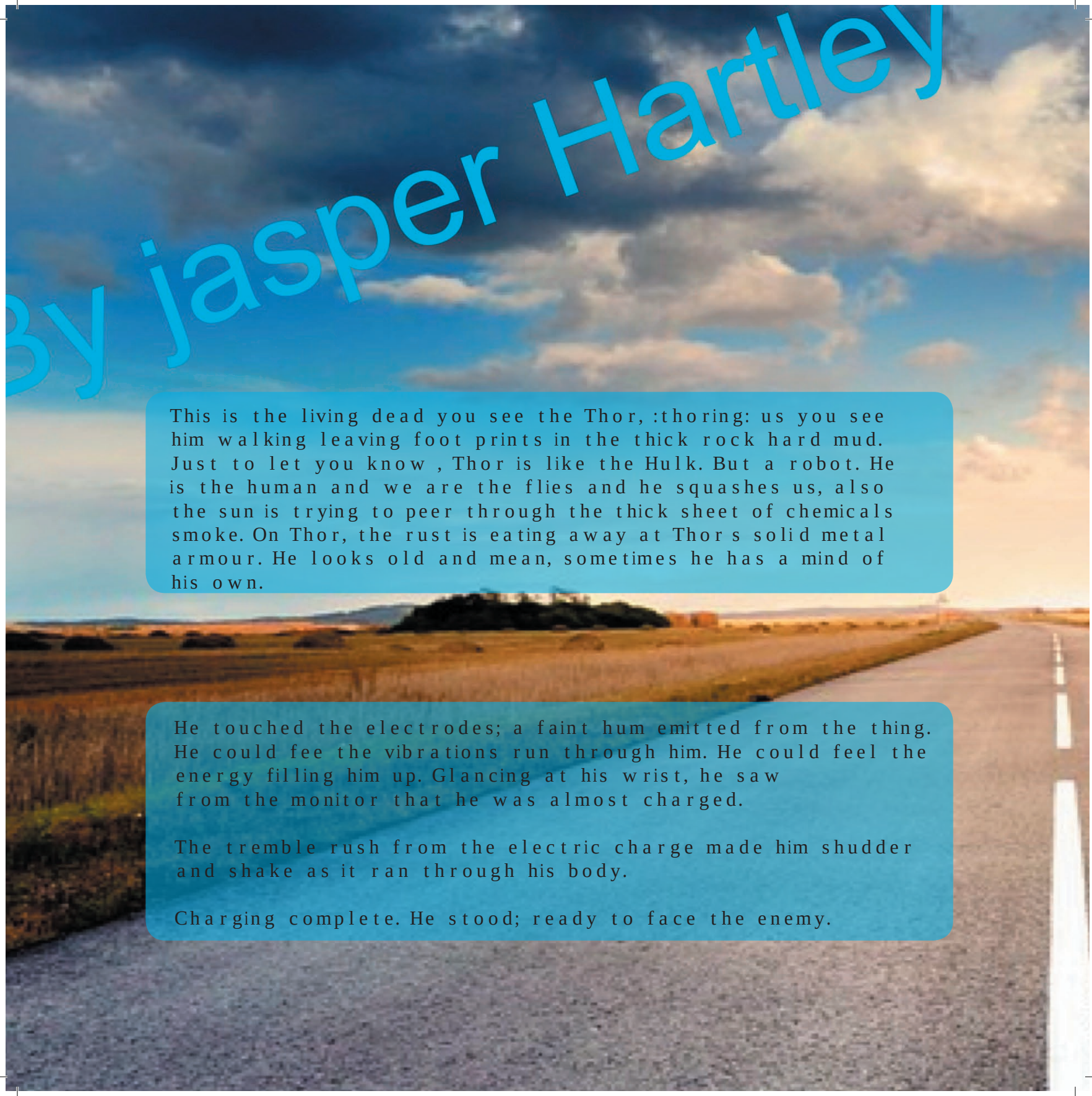
Giant craters
Ruined buildings
Fires everywhere
I can't see no life
I don't know I survived

A few days ago I didn't believe in monsters, not until I saw them face to face. Some people call them our destruction, most just call them monsters, but me, I call them mutants. One of the mutants is our saviour, the Japanese call it Godzilla. The origins of all the monsters were told yesterday by the Government. They told that a highly classified military group left unnamed, were genetically fusing animals underneath Penryn College without their know. They were in the middle of trsnaporting the creatures to their new base of operation, then the creatures started to grow to enormous lengths and started mutating.

Differences between computer games and novels

In novels it paints an image in your mind. But most games already have characters made.
In games you can explore as much as you like. But in a book you're confined to an area.

The laws that robots in future would follow would be they can't harm or kill humans.
the new film 'Ex-Machina' is about an AI getting feelings for the protagonist and asks for help.



By jasper Hartley

This is the living dead you see the Thor, :thoring: us you see him walking leaving foot prints in the thick rock hard mud. Just to let you know , Thor is like the Hulk. But a robot. He is the human and we are the flies and he squashes us, also the sun is trying to peer through the thick sheet of chemicals smoke. On Thor, the rust is eating away at Thor s solid metal armour. He looks old and mean, sometimes he has a mind of his own.

He touched the electrodes; a faint hum emitted from the thing. He could fee the vibrations run through him. He could feel the energy filling him up. Glancing at his wrist, he saw from the monitor that he was almost charged.

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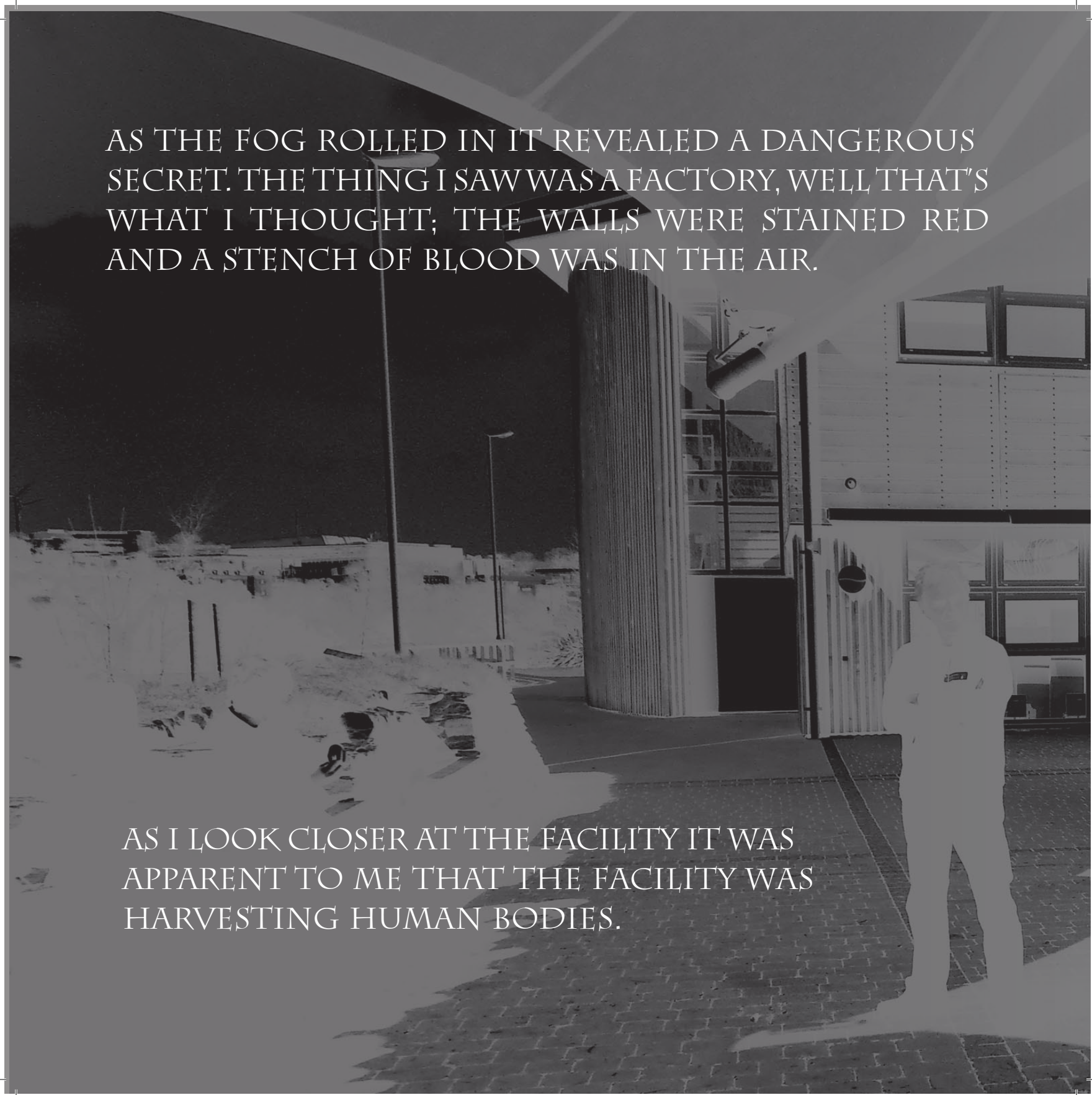
Road to automat



AS THE FOG ROLLED IN IT REVEALED A DANGEROUS SECRET. THE THING I SAW WAS A FACTORY, WELL THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT; THE WALLS WERE STAINED RED AND A STENCH OF BLOOD WAS IN THE AIR.

AS I LOOK CLOSER AT THE FACILITY IT WAS APPARENT TO ME THAT THE FACILITY WAS HARVESTING HUMAN BODIES.

DANIEL

draft cover design by Kian

name

Road to Automata - double pag

positioning of drawings instructions (optional)

select overall page colour

some of the draft layout ideas worked on during the design writing stage

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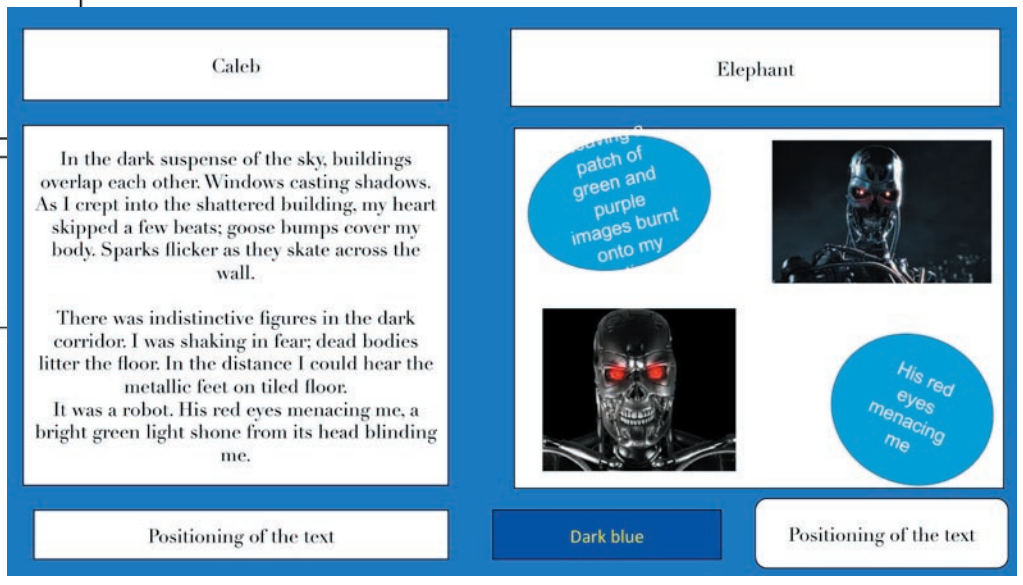


The students chosen by Beth Sullivan to participate in the *Road to Automata* project were selected for a variety of reasons. The first, and probably most important, being that as an all boy group, it was thought that the Automata theme was something that would appeal to a male target audience and was something with which they would engage (I know it's a stereotypical idea, but one which still remains a truism).

The boys enjoyed the practical aspect of making automata and their visit to Falmouth Art Gallery. The follow-up sessions allowed their imagination to have free rein, with the result that some very creative writing and interesting art work has been achieved.

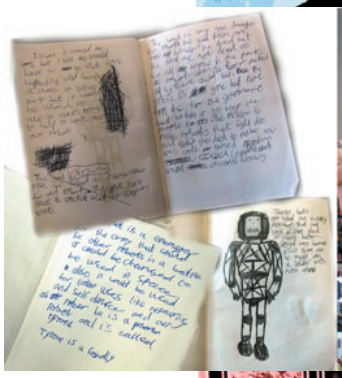
They are very keen to see their work in print. As their teacher, I feel it is important to allow them to be able to write and create for a real audience and for them to see that the effort and enthusiasm they demonstrated in taking part in the project is appreciated.

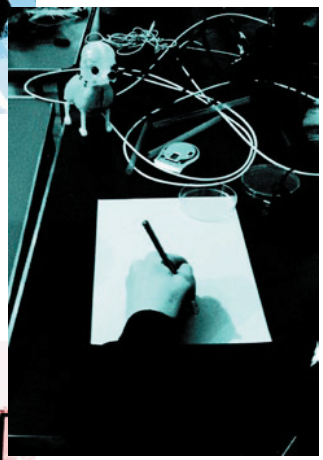
Thank you to everyone involved for giving the boys the opportunity to participate in the project.

Linda Herring
Teacher of English
Penryn College

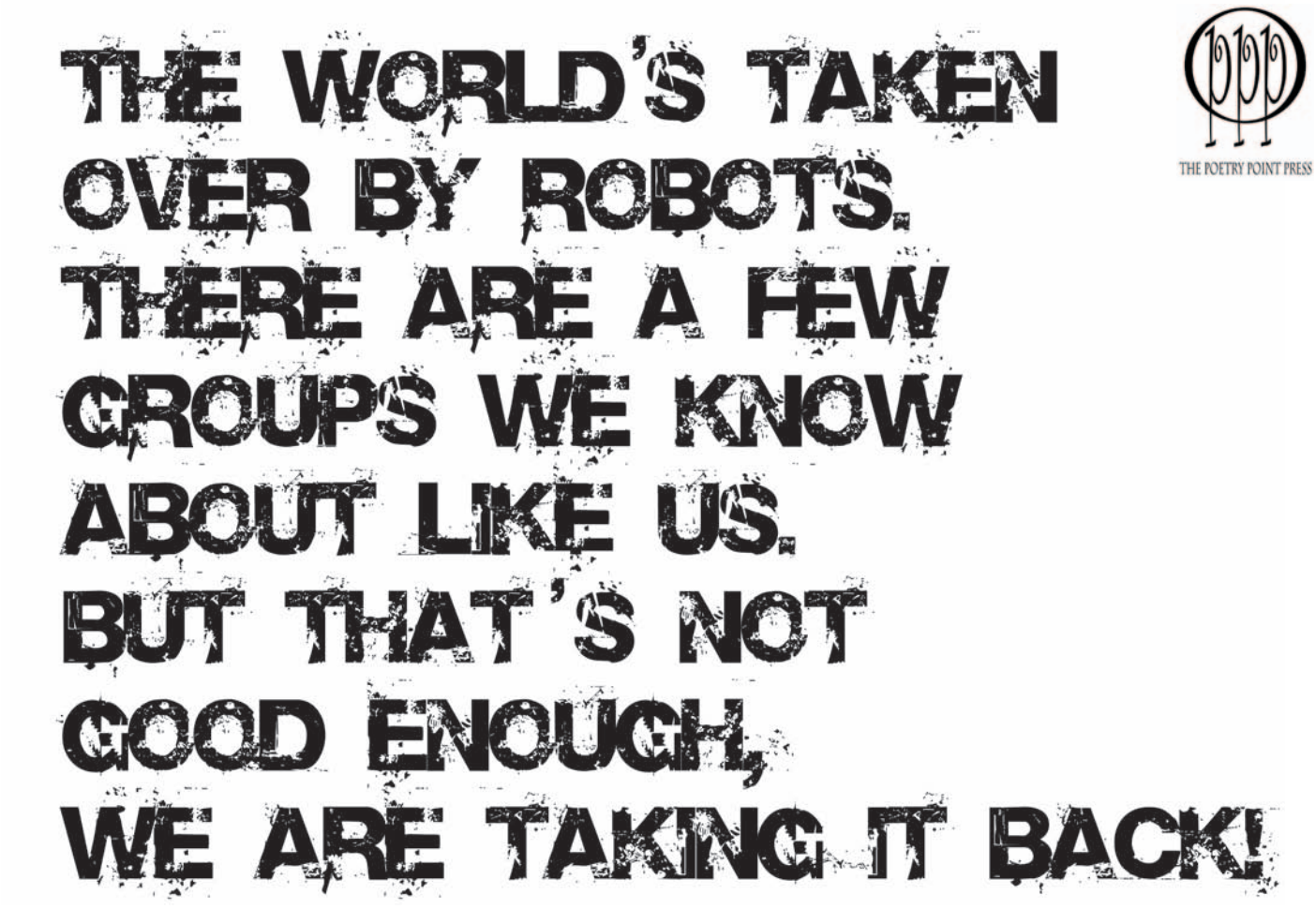
Falmouth Art Gallery's collection inspired the work in two ways. The sessions were held in the gallery space where we could bring out examples of automata, especially those made by the artist Fi Henshaw. The cleverness of the mechanisms could be observed first hand, and were used to inspire ways of moving the students creations through the use of cams and pulleys. The work of Patrick Woodroffe was hung in the gallery at the time and many of his paintings contain elements of fantastical and science fiction, such as the blending of the biological and mechanical, which are commonly encountered in dystopian films and games.

Tony Johns,
Automata Workshop Facilitator





THE POETRY POINT PRESS



THE POETRY POINT PRESS

extract and cover concept by Lennon

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